

Contributed

THE DEFINITE AIM OF THE CHURCH.

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(Concluded.)

The Church of the Lord Jesus Christ has a higher aim and a more definite motive. It is something greater, and higher and mightier than that. It is to bring man to repentance, and to the acceptance of the Lord Jesus.

Cleansed Inside, Then Outside.

Now, I am just going to emphasize two thoughts in closing. I want to say that if this is the definite aim of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, that in my judgment, it includes all these things. The moment you set to saving a man's soul, you will begin to take care of that man's body. An eminent minister from this country some years ago stood in the pulpit of the Metropolitan Tabernacle of London, during the time of the great Charles Spurgeon's ministry, and as he looked over that mighty audience and the benediction had been pronounced, he said: "I have not seen in your congregation anybody that was ragged or poorly clad, or hungry looking. I thought you gathered a great many such out of the slums."

And Mr. Spurgeon said, with that homely wit of his, "No, because when we get a man clothed with the robe of Christ's righteousness, the next thing he does is to put on good clothes. When we get him clean inside, he soon gets clean outside. He is cleansed every whit."

It is true. When you take a man out of the gutter and convert his soul by the power of the Divine Spirit you have gone a long way toward putting that man upon his feet from a material and ordinary point of view. There were a great many poor people in the days of the Apostle Paul. We are told about the only collections he took were collections for the poor in Jerusalem, but I bid you notice, if you please, that Paul saw to the conversion of the soul before he began to feed the poor body.

He did not run a kind of soup house in order to reach the soul, and I think the kind of evangelism that begins with a soup house will end with the soup house. It must begin with saving a man's soul, and then we can begin to take care of his material wants next.

The Gospel Corrects Social Wrongs.

There were a great many ordinary wrongs in the days of the Apostle Paul, my friends. Slavery was universal, and not the kind of slavery that some of you older people remember about a few years ago, but a slavery that was cruel as death; a slavery that gave the poor slave not only no rights; but never imagined that he was even a human being; that put him below the level of the domestic animal of the house. Did the Apostle Paul go around and inveigh against slavery? Not at all. The Apostle Paul knew this, my brethren, that if he could get the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ into the heart of the master, and into the heart of the slave, so they realized that with Christians there was neither bond nor free, the very monstrous slavery of the Roman Empire would be destroyed by that very simple fact. Yet, my friends, some leading lights told me today that the Church had better go to preaching about the mod-

ern slavery of labor to capital and ordinary evils that are current in the community.

My friends, the greatest mistake that the Church could possibly make would be just that—when it turned away from the simple Gospel of the Son of God and began to discuss the ordinary evils and their remedies.

The aesthetic taste was developed in Paul, and yet he did not preach aestheticism. The women that listened to his sermon did not go away and say, "Oh, what a beautiful poem we heard from the Apostle Paul this morning." They heard something better, and yet, my friends, the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ has given us the divinest poetry that the world has ever had, and has spoken to us in a voice of music with the sweetness the very angels might covet, and has left us upon the paintings and in sculpture, images that appeal to the highest aesthetic sense of men. The religion of the Lord Jesus Christ takes in all, includes all.

The One Aim Energizes All.

The last thought that I bring is this: that this definite aim of the Church energizes all of its work; every department of its labor. There is not a single sphere of the Church's activities that this definite aim will not energize to its fullest extent.

Let the Church of God be aflame with the desire to save souls, and every instrumentality and every agency that the church employs will be full of a divine power.

Our orphanages are not simply institutions to put some clothes on the bodies and some food in the mouths of certain poor children. When we realize that our orphanages are a great evangelistic agency; that they are bringing to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, scores of children; that they are sending out into our beautiful land men and women fitted by reason of religion to take their places in the great work of the world, I believe we will not have to beg you to give your few dollars to take hold of the hundred orphans in our Home.

My friends, when the Church of Rome did not have a single church building; when the Church of Rome was hiding in the catacombs beneath that great city, Uhland tells us in his great "Conflict of Atheism with Christianity" that the Church of Rome took care of ten thousand orphans. Why, they bought the slaves' children; they bought the babies in the public market that they might make Christians of them.

When the appeal comes to you men and women for our orphanages, don't think it is to buy flour and meat and clothes for those little children; it is to support an evangelistic agency which reaches the souls of men.

When we begin to feel that our Educational Institutions are not simply to leave a religious imprint on the minds of our boys and girls, but above all to lay the hand of grace upon the souls of our youth, our Educational Institutions will not have to beg for money to pay their debts, or to support them.

When we realize that foreign missions mean something more than selling cotton cloth to the Chinese, or covering the nakedness of the African; when we realize that it means something else than merely carrying commerce and the flag to the ends of the earth, instead of \$256,000 from 256 thousand Christians, we will have the million dollars without any trouble. What I am